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THE ARABIC WORDS IN PALMYRENE INSCRIPTIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

More than two thousand Palmyrene inscriptions have been discovered in both Palmyra and adjacent regions. Palmyrene inscriptions were also found in several scattered areas from South Arabia to England. These inscriptions are attributed to Palmyrene merchants and soldiers (Hillers-Cussini 1996).

The Palmyrene inscriptions have a unique position among Semitic epigraphy for two important reasons. Firstly, the first deciphered and published Semitic inscription was Palmyrene, and secondly the longest North West Semitic inscription which has been discovered until now is also a Palmyrene inscription. In fact the publishment of Palmyrene inscriptions in the early 17th century was the first step for studying the Semitic epigraphy. (Lidzbarski 1898, 5; Daniels 1988, 419-36.) The earliest dated Palmyrene inscription is from the year 44 BC and the latest discovery has been dated to the year 274 AD. (Starcky - Gawlikowski 1985, 27-32.)

Moreover, to me the Palmyrene script is the most beautiful one among the North West Semitic scripts and the second in its beauty after the South Arabian script among the Semitic scripts.

Palmyra (Tadmur) had already appeared at the beginning of the second millennium BC in Cuneiform texts and continued later on to be mentioned in the same sources. Palmyra flourished in the 1st and the 2nd century AD and reached its peak in the 3rd century AD in the time of Odainath and Zenobia. In the year 273 AD Palmyra was destroyed by the Romans. (Stoneman 1992; Will 1992.)

Most of the people of Palmyra were Arabs. This can be determined from personal names evident in their inscriptions. The language of the Palmyrene inscriptions is a West Aramaic dialect and has its substratum in Imperial Aramaic. It has, however, some features related to East Aramaic. The Aramaic of the Palmyrene inscriptions is cited within the phase of Middle Aramaic (300 BC-200 AD). (Fitzmyer 1979, 57-84; Brock 1989, 11-23; Degen 1987, 27-31; Hillers 1995, 55-62; Naccache 1996.) Which language was exactly

spoken in everyday life in Palmyra is difficult to know, but from the evidence given to us, the Palmyrene Aramaic and Arabic were spoken and understood. Apparently, Greek was understood and used by intellectuals and merchants, and the use of Latin was reduced to only some writing and speaking. However, it wasdifferent in Palmyra than in the Nabataean state, where the people spoke Arabic in their everyday life and wrote in Nabataean Aramaic. The task of this paper is to find out Arabic loan-words and arabism, and to clarify their use in the Palmyrene inscriptions.

II. Arabic in Palmyra

Since the majority of the people of Palmyra were Arabs, the influence of Arabic on the language of the Palmyrene inscriptions is to be expected. However, this remains an important fact in studying the influence of the written language on native speakers whose spoken language is different. The same could be said in studying the Arabic loan-words in Nabataean inscriptions. (O'Connor 1986, 213-29; Healey 1995, 75-84; Greenfield 1992, 10-21.) But there is a different nature in the relationship between Semitic languages such as Akkadian and Aramaic. Two different Semitic people who spoke different languages came in contact together and their languages were influenced by each other. Aramaic is the most important Semitic language when studying languages in contact as well as the history and development of a Semitic language. This is due to the long history of Aramaic as a written language, starting from ca. the beginning of the first millennium BC until today. In addition Aramaic was the *lingua franca* in the Ancient Near East and was spoken and written by various peoples there. (Beyer 1986; Kaufman 1974.)

One of the greatest difficulties in both studying the contacts and recognising the loan-words in Semitic languages, is the common Semitic roots that are found in all Semitic languages. Besides this, there are also roots that are described to be common North West Semitic or West Semitic. Thus, there are difficulties to determine whether some terms are borrowed or merely cognates. Unfortunately, we do not know about the language of the *Aribi* "Arabs" of the Akkadian sources. For studying the earliest stage of the Arabic language the reconstruction of the Arabic elements in the Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions is of great importance.

Four aspects in the Palmyrene inscriptions have been influenced by Arabic. These are personal names, divine names, morphological and syntactical features and loan-words. The first word that must be interpreted according to Arabic

and South Arabic is the name of the city Tadmur. It appears in the Palmyrene inscriptions as *tdmr*, *tdmwr*. It has been suspected by M. Gawli- kowski and J. Starcky that the name *tadmur* means according to the Semitic root *ḏmr* "poste de garde". (Starcky - Gawlikowski 10985, 33.) Nevertheless, some researchers are still repeating the etymology of *tadmur* as "palm-tree" connecting that with the biblical place name *tamār*. (e.g. White 1992, 307.) Some scholars tried to interpret *tadmur* in association with the word Palmyra believing that it must be the same as well as they give it the meaning, "palm-tree". Arabic sources maintain that the city Tadmur received its name after a woman bearing the name "Tadmur daughter of Ḥassān b. Uḏaina b. as-Sumaidaʿ b. … Nūḥ". (e.g. Yāqūt, I, 828-31, cf. also the discussion by Al-Hilou 1986, 90.) It is noteworthy that *tdmr* (and *tdmwr*) as a women's name is attested in Palmyrene inscriptions. (Stark 1971, 116.) However, this women's name was given after the city name Tadmur. Meanwhile, Arabic Lexicons give an etymology for Tadmur to be derived from Arabic *dmr* "to destroy" (Lisān, Article *dmr*). These folk etymologies cannot be accepted. However, the interpretation of the name *tadmur* must be based on its historical attestation in written records. The occurrence of the name of Tadmur as *tḏmr* in a Hadramitic inscription (Bron 1986, 95-98.) makes it clear that its etymology is due to the common West Semitic root *ḏmr*. This root appears in Aramaic only in personal names, but it is well attested in South Arabic. *ḏmr* is defined in Sabaic as "to protect". (Sab.Dic, 39.) The root *ḏmr* occurs in place names, for example in the city name Ḏamār in Yemen. The form *tafʿal* is evident in place names. (Isserlin 1986, 46.) The name of the capital of the kingdom of Qataban *tmnʿ*/Tamnaʿ (Timnaʿ) and the ancient place name Timnaʿ in Palestine have not only the form *tafʿal*, but also the meaning as *taḏmur* "a place of protection". Tadmur means then "city of protection" or "the one that guarantees protection". This designates the function not only as a caravan station but also as a shelter and refuge for the people of the desert. The occurrence of *tadmur* in the cuneiform texts from the second and the first millennium BC makes it clear that the city was originally an Amorite establishment and the name itself must be considered as Amorite.

The most important feature of Arabic influences in Palmyra is the attestation of a high proportion of Arabic personal names in the Palmyrene inscriptions. The majority of these personal names are Arabic or have an Arabic etymology. (Stark 1971; Teixidor 1991; Piersimoni 1994.) Some of these names are very important for the Arabic lexicon such as *ḥbzy* (*ḫabbāz*) "baker", (Stark 1971, 87.) a fact which means that the Arabic word *ḫubz* "bread" may have not been a loan from Geʿez as it has been suggested by

Th. Nöldeke. (Nöldeke 1910, 56; Leslau 1991, 257.) Furthermore, some of the tribe names could be interpreted according to Arabic, e.g. the name of the Palmyrene tribe *bny mʿzyn*. The suggestion of M. Gawlikowski that the word *mʿzyn* relates to Arabic *māʿiz* "goat" is plausible. (Gawlikowski 1973, 38ff.) He explains the name of this tribe as "the tribe of the goat-herds". Since this word in this form exists only in Arabic the interpretation seems to be right. Besides *māʿiz* in Arabic we have *ʿanz* meaning "goat" and *ʿzz* in North West Semitic and in Akkadian *ezzu, enzu*. (HAL, 761ff.) Nevertheless, the word *mʿz* can be also interpreted as Arabic *muʿāḏ* and *maʿzayn* as *muʿāḏiyyūn* (pl.). This word derives from Arabic *ʿwḏ* "to seek protection, take refuge". However, Arabic genealogists record a tribe name *muʿāḏ* as a subdivision of the tribe *Laḫm*. (Kaḥḥāla, 1991, III, 1114.) The element *mʿz* meaning "taking refuge, refuge", is well attested in Aramaic onomastica. (Maraqten 1988, 115.) Worthy of note is that the root *ʿwḏ* itself is not attested in Aramaic lexicon, but in Arabic. Remarkable also is the writing of /*ḏ*/ with /*z*/ in Palmyra. (Rosenthal 1936, 24.) The common designation for tribe in Palmyra is *bny*. This is the most usual usage to designate North Arabian tribes. The Aramaic term to indicate a "tribe" is *bīt*. However, the occurrence of the term *bny* with the meaning "sons" in Mari and North West Semitic is to be noted. (Malamat 1992, 35.) Nevertheless, the term *bny* in Palmyra could be an Arabic influence.

The second aspect for Arabic influence is the occurrence of Arabic deities like *Allāt, Manāt*, *Ruḍā* (*rṣʾ*, *ʾrṣw*), *Saʿd* (*šʿd*) and others. (Teixidor 1979.) Another aspect of that is the attestations of some phrases in the inscriptions which could be Arabic rather than Aramaic.

III. Arabic Loan-Words

No doubt we can understand most of the Palmyrene inscriptions by comparing them with other Aramaic dialects and Semitic languages. But it must be said that there are still some problems in understanding architectural, cultural and some ritual terms. The Palmyrene Aramaic is influenced by Akkadian, Greek and Arabic. To recognise Akkadian and Greek words is relatively easy, while Arabic words are in general difficult to see, and since Aramaic and Arabic are very close to each other, especially Imperial Aramaic. On the other hand there are some Arabic words which seem to be clearly Arabic and which are at the same time well attested in Aramaic. Thus, there are surely some Arabic loan-words in the Aramaic of Palmyra which could be found in Aramaic. Such words are difficult to recognise.

The appearance of Arabic words as loan-words in the Palmyrene inscriptions were recognised by scholars. Th. Nöldeke in his solid article (1870, 105-6.) has suggested 7 words to be of Arabic origin. These are: *pḥd*, *rḥmʾ*, *mgd*, *mlḥt*, *mqbrtʾ*, *ḥrm*, *wsmytʾ*. J. Cantineau (1935, 150-52.) recognised 10 words: *ʾpklʾ*, *gbl*, *wrš*, *mgd*, *mʿyd*, *škrʾ/skrʾ*, *pḥd/pḥzʾ*, *rzʾyn*, *twḥyt*, and the particle /*p*/. F. Rosenthal (1936, 94-96.) gives the possibility for 8 words, which according to him, could be of Arabic origin. These are the following: *pḥd/pḥz*, *pḥwz*, *gbl*, *ḥl*, *ḥlʾ*, *bl*, *mgd*, *šyrth* (?). W.W. Müller suggests 6 words as examples for Arabic loans in Palmyra: *skrʾ/škrʾ*, *mʿd*, *gr*, *pḥd/pḥz*, *gbl*, *rzʾyn*. (Müller 1982, 32.) J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling in their solid work DNWSI did not give real attention for Arabic loans in the Palmyrene Aramaic. Nevertheless, they give some remarks. There are also other scholars who recognised Arabic loans in the language of Palmyra. These will be mentioned in the discussion.

It is to be noted that some words which have been classified as Arabic loans were not correctly read. These are now corrected or reinterpreted, (see e.g. Rosenthal 1936, 49.) e.g. the word *mlḥt* was considered as Arabic *maluḥat* "pleasant". (Nöldeke 1870, 106; Cook 1898, 73; Cooke 1903, 277f.) It is now corrected to *m*[*y*]*tt* "dead". (CIS II, 3954/3.) The interpretation of the word *zkrt* (1 pers. sg.) which has been suggested by J. Cantineau (1935, 151.) is uncertain. (DNWSI, 322.) The Arabic definite article *ʾl* is only attested in the goddess name *ʾlt* (= *Al-lāt*). The *p*-conjunction (= Arabic *fa*-) in Nabataean and Palmyrene Aramaic is Arabic. This particle is read and suggested in the Palmyrene inscriptions to be Arabic by J. Cantineau. (1935, 150, J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling doubt this reading, DNWSI, 899.) However, this conjunction may be considered to be Arabic influence in Palmyrene inscriptions according to syntactical reasons. It is attested several times in Old and Imperial Aramaic. (DNWSI, 899.) But the conjunction /*p*/ "and, then" is more common in North and South Arabic (see the discussion by Nebes 1995, 255-70.) than Aramaic. The suggestion of M. O'Connor that /*p*/ could be Arabic or Aramaic in the Nabataean inscriptions is untenable. This must be determined Arabic according to syntactical reasons. (O'Connor 1986, 216, note 15; Healey 1995, 79.)

Besides the loans discussed above, this is a discussion of 23 words which are also attested in the Palmyrene inscriptions. I think that these words are of Arabic origin. The reasons for this are that some of them are clearly Arabic and common to Arabic than other Semitic languages. Some of them can be explained etymologically only according to Arabic, and others are terms connected with Arabian culture which could have been seen as Arabic idioms for cultural reasons.

1. ʾPKLʾ

The word *ʾpklʾ* "priest, religious administrator" has been proposed by J. Cantineau (1935, 150; DNWSI, 95f.) to be an Arabic loan in Palmyra and this is also suspected by S. Kaufman. (Kaufman 1974, 34f.) However, it is accepted by scholars to be a loan from Akkadian *apkallu*. (= Sumerian *ab.gal*, Kaufman 1974, 34f.) This term seems to be a high religious functionary title, which was widely used by Arabs. It appears among the Nabataeans, in North Arabia (Healey 1994, 160-62; Healey 1995, 78.) and among Sabaeans in South Arabia (Beeston 1994, 40). S. Kaufman suggests that this word is an early borrowing from Akkadian into Arabic. (Kaufman 1974, 34.) According to cultural reasons, it may be assumed that *ʾpklʾ* came through Arabic into Palmyrene Aramaic and not through Akkadian or Aramaic.

2. GBL

The word *gbl* (*gibill*) occurs several times in the construction *gbl tdmryʾ* "the Palmyrenean's council". (CIS II 3923/3; DNWSI, 210.) This word is considered to be an Arabic loan-word in Palmyrene inscriptions by J. Cantineau, (1935, 150.) F. Rosenthal. (1936, 89, 98) and W.W. Müller (1982, 32).) But J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling doubt the Arabic origin of this word. (DNWSI, 210.) It is always translated as "collectivity, people, assembly" and the phrase *gbl tdmryʾ* as "the collectivity of the Palmyreneans". (DNWSI, 210.)

The word *gbl* must be explained according to Arabic, since there is no other possibility for its etymology with this meaning in other Semitic languages. This word is attested 6 times in the Qurʾān (36: 63, see Abū al-Futūḥ 1990, 47.) and means "a great company of people". It is also given this meaning in Arabic Classical lexicons. According to the commentaries of the Qurʾān the word *ǧibill* can be read differently. (Tāǧ, article *gbl*, Lane, 376.) It can be read *ǧubull* and *ǧibill* but the latter is most common. (Tāǧ, article *gbl*.)

gbl is understood in general to be collective, and has also been interpreted as pl. of the word *ǧibilla*. There is no reason to suspect that *gbl* is anything other than a native Arabic word.

Of importance is the attestation of the word *gbl* several times in the Lihyanite inscriptions. (Lih. 71 = JS 41, Lih. 77 = JS 72, Lih. 87 = JS 52, Lih. 91 = JS 71.) It has been translated by W. Caskel in association with its occurrence in Palmyra and Arabic (Caskel 1954, no. 71.) as "Vollversammlung". No indications of this word exist in South Arabian inscriptions; a fact which means that the term *ǧibill* is native North Arabic. It appears that *gbl* was an important social institution in Palmyra. It seems to be that it was originally

a tribal institution which continued to exist after the establishment of the Palmyrene state. Worthy of note is that the Palmyreneans continued using this term *gbl* in spite of using many Greek terms in the area of administrations. This means that this institution was not only very important, but it seems to be that it was the "national organisation" of the Palmyrene people.

3. GMLʾ

This word which occurs several times in Palmyrene Aramaic is to be considered as Arabic. (DNWSI, 226.) The word *ǧamal* "camel" is understood by scholars to be a common Semitic word. (Leslau 1991, 194.) However, this could be seen as an Arabic word on cultural grounds. Several scholars think that the origin of the dromedary or the one-humped camel was from Arabia. It has been suggested that the camel had been domesticated in North West Arabia some time in the middle of the second millennium BC. (Zarins 1992, 824-26.) The use of camels from the second half of the second millennium BC in the Ancient Near East was associated to North and South Arabs, as evidenced by the Old Testament, (HAL, 189.) Egyptian sources, (Redford 1993, 271ff.) Akkadian texts and South Arabian inscriptions. (Sab.Dic, 49.) The earliest mention of the camel is *gamlu*, *gammalu*, viz. *ǧamal* from the New Assyrian period. (CAD, G 35f.) However, there is no doubt that *ǧamal* is an Arabic native word, adapted by other Semitic languages.

4. GR

The word *gr* is attested several times in the North West Semitic epigraphy and especially in personal names. It is usually translated as "client, protégé, follower". (DNWSI, 232; Benz 1972, 298f.) It has been suggested to be of Arabic origins in the Palmyrene inscriptions. (Müller 1982, 32.) The substantives *gyr* (**ǧāʾir* or **ǧāyir*) (CIS II 3973, 8) and *gr* (**ǧār*) in Palmyrene Aramaic (e.g. CIS II, 4218/5; Müller 1982, 32.) can be explained according to the Arabic verb *ǧr*/*ǧwr* (cf. Arabic *aǧāra* "to grant asylum or a sanctuary, to protect"). The word *gyr* (**ǧāʾir*) has an active meaning and can be understood as Arabic *muǧīr* "protector". However, the Arabic word *ǧīra* "neighbourhood, protection" is important in understanding the word *gyr* in Palmyra. It was the custom of Arabs to guarantee protection for somebody especially a foreigner if he seeks refuge. Such custom is attested in a Palmyrene inscription which was set up by a Nabataean horseman called ʿUbaidu b. Ġānim for the god Shaiʿ al-Qaum. (CIS II 3973/7-8.) He describes the person by whom he had his hospitality as *gyrh wrḥmh* "his protector and friend". J. Teixidor

translates this phrase as "his patron and friend". (Teixidor 1973, 407.) However, this Nabataean person was a foreigner in Palmyra and had his protection (*ǧīra*) by a Palmyrene person who was his protector (*gyr*). ʿUbaidu seems to have been a client like an Arabic *maulā* of the Islamic period. The *mawālī* of the Islamic period had its origin in the pre-Islamic time, and one of the most important reasons for some body or a tribe to be a *maulā* "client" was *walāʾ al-ǧiwār* "protection". (Juda 1983, 19-21.) In spite of the attestation of the word *gr*/*gwr* in the West Semitic lexicon, (HAL, 193, 177; Leslau 1991, 207; Sab.Dic, 51.) it seems to be that *gr* "client" and *gyr* "protector" are an Arabic development. These are associated with the social institution of *al-mawālī* in the pre-Islamic North Arabian society. Apparently, the term *gyr* corresponds to Sabaic *gwr* "master, lord". (Sab.Dic, 51.) The "protector", "patron" or "lord" of a *maulā* is described in Arabic as "*sayyid*". In this context, there can be no doubt that the term *gr* "client" in Nabataean Aramaic is also of Arabic origin. (DNWSI, 232; O'Connor 1986, 218; see also the discussion by Healey 1993, 139.) Doubtful is the suggestion of M. Görg (1984, 10-13.) that the word *gr* in Hebrew is of Egyptian origin. (Redford 1993, 385.)

5. GNY'

This word has been discussed by several scholars and most of them think that this came to Arabic shortly before Islam through Aramaic. But it has been suggested by various scholars that it is of Arabic origin. (see the discussion by Henninger 1963, 309-11; Teixidor 1979, 77-78.) *gnyʾ* occurs several times in Palmyrene inscriptions. (DNWSI, 229f.) This word corresponds to Arabic *ǧinn* and appears in Palmyra as a group of deities. It is sometimes described to be a lower class of divine beings. The occurrence and presentation of *gnyʾ* in Aramaic is not really great. Actually it does not help us to figure out the origin and development of the *gnyʾ*. But it must be noted that the *ǧinn* plays a very important role in the superstition of the Arabs in the pre-Islamic period. (Henninger 1963, 279-316.) This is what the Arabic sources mention. For cultural reasons it may be assumed that *gnyʾ* is the same Arabic word *ǧinn*.

6. ŠKR'

The word *škrʾ* (pl. *škryʾ*) "rewarding" is attested several times in Palmyrene inscriptions in relation with various deities as a divine epithet. It also occurs sometimes as *skrʾ* (pl. *skryʾ*). *škrʾ* appears in such formulae: *ʾlhʾ ṭbʾ wškrʾ*

"the good and rewarding god" (CIS II 3973/4, 4013/2; Diem 1980, 76.) and *ṭb' wrḥmn' wskr'* "the good, merciful and rewarding one". (Inv. XI 38/2; DNWSI, 1135.) It must, however, be understood as part. active *šākir* "thankful, grateful".

J. Cantineau (1935, 42, 150.) and W.W. Müller (1982, 32.) believe that this word is of Arabic origin. Meanwhile, M. Lidzbarski (1898, 375.) gives the possibility that *škr'* has to be interpreted according to Arabic *šakara*. Such a position is doubted by J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling. (DNWSI, 1135.)

škr' can only be interpreted according to Arabic *šakara* "to thank" and be compared with *Allāh šakūr* "very thankful, grateful". It must be noted that there is no suitable etymology for the word *škr'* in other Semitic languages.

7. WRŠH

The word *wršh* "heiress, inheritance" (sing. st. emph. *wršt'*) in Palmyrene Aramaic (DNWSI, 298.) is clearly Arabic. This is Arabic *wirṯa*. It is said to be of Arabic origins by several scholars. (Cantineau 1935, 150; Diem 1980, 71.) This noun, however, derives from Arabic *wariṯa* "to be heir, inherit". (Lisān, article *wrṯ*.) Worthy of note is the writing of Arabic /*ṯ*/ with /*š*/ which is not common to Aramaic. This is a common West Semitic root; (Leslau 1991, 618.) South Arabic *wrṯ*, (Sab.Dic, 162.) North West Semitic *yrš* and *yrt*. (DNWSI, 471f.) It is well known that roots beginning with /*w*/ in Arabic and South Arabic change to /*y*/ in North West Semitic. Thus, Arabic *wršh* is used instead of Aramaic *yrt'*.

8. WLD'

wld' occurs in Palmyrene inscriptions and is used in these inscriptions instead of Aramaic *yld'*. (DNWSI, 457.) This word is most definitely of Arabic origin and has to be read as *wild* with the meaning "offspring, children, posterity" (Tāğ, article *wld*). The word *wld* as an Arabic word is also attested in Nabataean inscriptions. (O'Connor 1986, 219; Healey 1995, 78.) The word *wld* is common in North and South Arabic, (*wld*, Sab.Dic, 160.) while in the North West Semitic languages this word appears as *yld*. It derives, however, from the common Semitic root *wld* "bear, to give birth". (Leslau 1991, 613.) Except for the old occasion of the word *wld* in North West Semitic languages, it is more common to Arabic than other Semitic languages. However, it may be assumed that *wld* in Palmyra is Arabic rather than Aramaic.

9. MGD

This word appears in Palmyrene inscriptions as a verb *mgd* (*paʿel*) meaning "to give generously", or as a substantive *mgd*ʾ "liberality, generous gift, offering". J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling doubt that this word is Arabic. (DNWSI, 592.) But there is no question that this word has been borrowed from Arabic in Palmyrene inscriptions. This has been pointed out by Th. Nöldeke (1870, 106.) and accepted by M. Lidzbarski, (1898, 305.) G.A. Cooke, (1903, no. 112/3, 123/4.) J. Cantineau (1935, 150.) and F. Rosenthal. (1935, 95.) In Aramaic the noun *magdā* is used with the meaning of "lofty gift". Meanwhile, the verb *mgd* can be attributed to Arabic (Lane, 2689-90.) as opposed to Aramaic. (Brockelmann LS, 373.)

10. PḤD

This word is seen by most scholars to be a foreign word in the Palmyrene inscriptions. It occurs several times in the Palmyrene inscriptions and means "tribe, clan, a subdivision of a tribe". It appears sometimes as *pḥz* (pl. *pḥzy*ʾ). (DNWSI, 905.) The form *pḥwz* which has been understood as an aramaization of the Arabic *pḥd*, (Cantineau, 1935, 41.) is may be the Arabic pl. form (*fuḫūḏ*) of this word.

J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling mention that it is possible that this word could be of Arabic origin. (DNWSI, 905.) However, there can be no doubt that this word came from Arabic. It is one of the most recognisable Arabic words in Palmyra. *pḥd*/*pḥz* is explained by Th. Nöldeke, (1870, 106.) M. Lidsbarski, (1898, 350.) S. Cook, (1898, 97.) G.A. Cooke, (1903, 299.) J. Cantineau (1935, 150.) and F. Rosenthal, (1936, 94f.) W.W. Müller (1982, 32.) and others that this word originates from Arabic *faḫiḏ* with the meaning "clan, tribe" and the /*z*/ in the form *pḥz* is interpreted to be a writing for /*ḏ*/. Meanwhile, it must be noted that the Palmyrene word *pḥd* has its origin in Arabic as *faḫid* with /*d*/ and the Palmyrene word *pḥz* has its origin in the Arabic *faḫiḏ* with /*ḏ*/ since the two forms are known in Arabic. (Tāǧ, article *fḫd*; Lane, 2348-49.)

It seems to be that *pḥd* was an important social institution in Palmyra. However, to understand the function and the position of the *pḥd* in Palmyra the classification for an Arabic *faḫid* in the structure of a tribe and its sub- divisions is of importance. Arabic genealogists give different classifications for the genealogy and subdivisions of a tribe. One of the most accepted authorities on this subject is al-Imām al-Māwardī. In his book al-Aḥkām as-sulṭāniyya, he gives a classification of the genealogy of a tribe dividing it into six subdivisions. The

following example shows the position of the *faḫiḏ* of Banū Hāšim as a subdivision of Quraiš: (Al-Alūsī, *Bulūġ al-arab*, 3, 188-191.)

ʿAdnān (*šaʿb*) – Qaḥṭān (*šaʿb*)
↓
Muḍar (*Qabīla*)
↓
Quraiš (*ʿimāra*) – Kināna (*ʿimāra*)
↓
Banū ʿAbd Manāf (*baṭn*) – Banū Maḫzūm (*baṭn*)
↓
Banū Hāšim (*faḫiḏ*) – Banū Umayya (*faḫiḏ*)
↓
Banū Abī Ṭālib (*faṣīla*) – Banū al-ʿAbbās (*faṣīla*)
↓
Rahaṭ an-Nabīy (*usar*)

11. MʿYD

mʿyd (= Arabic *muʿīd*) is considered to have its origin in Arabic by J. Cantineau (1935, 150.) and by W.W. Müller. (1982, 32.) However, it is interpreted from the Arabic root *ʿawada* (*Afʿal*) meaning "visit regularly, to have the custom to visit (a place)". (Lane, 2190-91.) *mʿyd* is only attested in Palmyrene inscriptions among the North West Semitic epigraphy, (DNWSI, 831.) and it can only be explained according to Arabic. The following example gives its clear meaning: *kl mʿyd ʿlwtʾ ʾln* "all visitors who visit these altars". (CIS II 3973/10.)

12. RZʾYN

There is a general agreement among most of the scholars that this word is not of Aramaic origin in the Palmyrene inscriptions. J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling doubt the Arabic interpretation of this word. (DNWSI, 1065.) There is no suitable etymology for the word *rzʾyn* in Aramaic. However, the translation of the sentence *wḥsk rzʾyn šgyʾyn* "he spent money in a most generous habit" is an evidence for its meaning. (CIS II, 3932/5.) The consideration of this word as an Arabic loan-word (Arabic *ruzʾ*) has been widely accepted by researchers. (Cantineau 1935, 151; Cooke 1903, 280; Lidzbarski 1898, 368; Müller 1982, 32.) The Sabaic word *rzʾ* is of importance for the interpretation of this word which is evident as a verb meaning "expend" and as a noun *rzʾ* and *trzʾ* meaning "expenditure". (Sab.Dic, 120.)

13. ŠYRH

šyrh (sing. abs. *šyrʾ*, stat. cstr. *šyrt*, stat. emph. *šyrtʾ*, pl. *šyryn*) appears several times in Palmyra. This always occurs in association with *rb*, *rbnwt*, *rʾš*, *br* and *bny*. (DNWSI, 1130.)

It may be suggested that the Palmyrene word *šyrh* is the Arabic word *sayyāra*. This has been, however, doubted by S. Fraenkel, (1886, 180.) G.A. Cooke (1903, 271.) and F. Rosenthal (1936, 95.) who wrote that this word might be of Arabic origin and could be considered as an Arabic loan-word in Aramaic. But it is obvious that this word can only derive from the verbal root *šyr*, a verb which is common in Arabic as *sāra*. The verb *sāra* (*sayara*) in Arabic has its basic meaning "to go, to travel" which may decide the origin of this word, since this verb is not attested elsewhere in other Semitic languages. (Lisān, article *syr*.) The word *šyrh* seems to be an aramaization of the Arabic *sayyāra*. The writing of the sibilant /*š*/ in this word for Arabic /*s*/ may be compared with the writing of the Arabic loan *nšyb* (= *nasīb*) "father-in-law" in Nabataean. (Healey 1995, 79.) Perhaps the construction *rʾš šyrtʾ* "leader of the caravan" is Arabic, used side by side with Aramaic *rb šyrtʾ* with the same meaning. (DNWSI, 1130.)

sayyāra meaning "caravan" has been given by Arabic authorities and lexicons, *wa-s-sayyāra hiya l-qāfila* "the *sayyāra* is a caravan" (Lisān, article *syr*). Such a fact supports our interpretation. In any case the word *sayyāra* for "caravan" was very common among Arabs in the pre-Islamic period. However, the Arabic word *šyrh* for caravan is used here instead of Aramaic *ʾrḥ* and Hebrew *orḥā* "caravan". (DNWSI, 106; HAL, 84.)

14. QYWM

qywm means "patron, protector" in Palmyrene Aramaic. (DNWSI, 1007f.) This word with the same meaning corresponds to Arabic *qayyūm* "the Everlasting, the Eternal" (God) which appears in the Qurʾān. It has been suggested to be an Aramaic or a Hebrew loan-word in Arabic. (Jeffery 1938, 244f.) However, it appears in South Arabic and Early North Arabic inscriptions as a theophoric element in personal names. The following are some examples: *qymw* occurs in Palmyra, (Stark 1971, 110.) in Nabataean personal names, *qywmʾ*, *ʾbnqwmw*, *zydqwm* (Negev 1992, 9, 26, 57.) and the Sabaic name *zydqwmm*. (Ja 656/1.) According to this, it may be assumed that the Arabic *qayyūm* is of North or South Arabic origin which has been introduced to Palmyrene inscriptions as a loan-word.

15. TWḤYT

This word meaning "decision" is suggested by J. Cantineau (1935, 151) and F. Rosenthal (1936, 65, note 4.) to be an Arabic word. It gets its etymology from the Arabic root *wḥy* "to inspire, to reveal, to give an idea" (Lisān, article *wḥy*). The following is an example for its appearance in the Palmyrene inscriptions: *mn twḥyt bwlʾ wdmws* "by the decision of the senate and the people". (DNWSI, 1206.)

16. SLʿ

This word occurs several times in the Palmyrene Aramaic. (DNWSI, 788.) The word *slʿ* means a certain kind of coin which is mostly known from the Nabataean inscriptions, meaning a Nabataean drachma. (Healey 1993, 78.) The earliest attestation of *slʿ* in the sources is associated with the Nabataeans. Remarkable that there are other terms in the area for coins such as *shekel* in Hebrew. Worthy of note that the Nabataeans were the earliest among the people of North Arabia who developed a coinage system. Thus, it may be assumed that *slʿ* is an old North Arabic word and considered as a loan not only in Nabataean Aramaic but also in the Palmyrene inscriptions. It also occurs as a loan-word in Sabaic. A.F.L. Beeston (1994, 41.) considers it as a Nabataean word.

17. RGL

The words *rgl* (CIS II 3913, ii 3.) and *rgly* (CIS II 3913, ii 6, 81; DNWSI, 1060.) are attested in Palmyrene Aramaic. (DNWSI, 1060.) Both derive from the common West Semitic root *rgl* "foot, leg". *rgly* meaning "pedestrian, foot-soldier" is, however, proved in Biblical Hebrew, (HAL, 1104-7.) South Arabic, (*rgl*, Sab.Dic., 116.) Arabic and Syriac. But the sense of *rgl*, viz. *rağul*, in this specific meaning "man, person" appears to be an Arabic development since its meaning is only found in Arabic. Thus it seems to be that the use of *rgl* in Palmyrene inscriptions was usually used instead of the Aramaic word *gbr* "man, person". (DNWSI, 210f.)

18. ʾNBṬ

The word *ʾnbṭ* "Nabataeans" is clearly the pl. of *nbṭ*. This word occurs on a tessere together with the term *gd* as follows: *gd ʾnbṭ* "fortune of the Nabataeans". (CIS II 3991; O'Connor 1986, 217.) The word *ʾnbṭ* has the Arabic broken pl. *afʿāl* and corresponds to a case in Arabic *anbāṭ*. The possibility of a reconstruction for the phrase *gd ʾnbṭ* as *gdʾ* [ʾ]*nbṭ* is unten-

able. (see the discussion by Milik – Starcky 1970, 158 and DNWSI, 213.) The occurrence of two constructions of such phrase makes the reading *gd ʾnbṭ* possible. The first one is as follows: *gdʾ* + *dy* + a name of tribe or place, *gdʾ dy dwrʾ* "fortune of (city of) Dūrā". The second one is as follows: *gd* + a name of place or tribe in the status constructus state, e.g. *gd tdmwr* "fortune of Tadmur". (see the examples by DNWSI, 213.) There is no need here for *alif* to be written with *gd* in this construction because it has not to stay in status emphaticus but in status constructus. Thus *gd ʾnbṭ* is a status constructus phrase like the second construction without using *dy*. (Rosenthal 1936, 75.)

19. ḤYRH

The word *ḥyrtʾ* "camp, citadel" in the Palmyrene inscriptions (CIS II 3973/3; DNWSI, 370.) is usually explained according to Syriac *ḥīrtā* "camp". (Cooke 1903, 304; Brockelman LS, 230.) But this word could be considered as a loan-word in Aramaic since there is no native Aramaic root for the etymology of it. (for the etymology of this root, see Shahîd 1984, 490-98.) It is somewhat difficult to derive this word from the North Arabic root *ḥayara* "to be confused". However, *ḥyrtʾ* may derive from the South Arabic root *ḥyr* which means "pitch camp". (Sab.Dic, 74.) The noun *ḥyrt*/*ḥrt* meaning "camp, encampment" in Sabaic seems to be the same word as in Palmyra. It is to be noted that this word has been suggested to be the city name al-Ḥīra. (Cooke 1903, 304.) This seems, however, unlikely.

20. ḤRM

Th. Nöldeke (1870, 106.) suggested that this word is more Arabic than Aramaic. (CIS II 3927/3). J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling doubt the interpretation of this word (*ḥr*[*m*]ʾ, *ḥr*[*my*]ʾ, see the discussion by DNWSI, 405.) However, it may be noted that the word *ḥrm* meaning "sacred enclosure, sanctuary" is common to North (*ḥaram*) and South Arabic. (*ḥrm*, *mḥrm*, Sab.Dic., 70f.; for the root *ḥrm* in Semitic, see Leslau 1991, 242.)

21. BL

This interjection which appears several times in the inscriptions meaning "without" (CIS II, 4207.) has been suggested by F. Rosenthal (1936, 95.) to have originated from Arabic *bi-lā*. However, it is common in Hatraean and may be found also in Nabataean Aramaic. (DNWSI, 165.)

22. MQBRTʾ

This word appears several times in Palmyrene inscriptions. (DNWSI, 678.) According to Th. Nöldeke (1870, 106.) this word might be Arabic and corresponds to Arabic *maqbara* “grave, cemetery”. He states that this form is not common to Aramaic.

23. MWLYʾ

The Palmyrene word *mwlyʾ* (pl. *mwln*) “patron” is interpreted according to the Arabic root *wly* “be close”. It is to be noted that there is no possible etymology for it from Aramaic. It may correspond to Arabic *mawlā*. The root *wly* in Arabic means “to be near, be close, lie next”. However, the Arabic word *maulā* “master, lord, protector, patron” is important to explain the Palmyrene word *mwlyʾ* (Tāǧ, article, *wly*). The word *mwlyʾ* (part. pass. from *wly*) can have the meaning “protected, or authorised”. This is proved from the following Palmyrene phrase: *whʾ npšʾ dh mwlyʾ bšmš* “this soul which is authorised by Šamaš”. (Inv. VIII 6/4, 8/3f., 37b/2.) This phrase is given by J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling to be of uncertain meaning. (see the discussion by DNWSI, 458.) The word *mwlyʾ* here may correspond to Arabic *mawliyya*/*mawliyyatun* with the same meaning. The Sabaic *wlyt* “protected persons, clients of a clan” which derives from the Sabaic root *wly* (Sab.Dic, 160.) could be compared with the Palmyrene word *mwlyʾ*.

IV. Arabic Phrases

There is no doubt that the language of the Palmyrene inscriptions is clearly Aramaic. Nevertheless there are some phrases which may be considered as Arabic rather than Aramaic. The following is a description of some of these phrases:

1. LKL RGL

The phrase *lkl rgl* “for every one, for every man” in the Tariff inscription (CIS II 3913 ii, 3.) corresponds at any rate to Arabic *li-kull rağul* with the same meaning. This phrase was used instead of the Old and Imperial Aramaic construction *kl gbr* with the same meaning. (DNWSI, 210f.) Moreover, the usage *kl ʾnwš* “for every person” is attested in Nabataean Aramaic. (Greenfield 1992, 18.) The word *ʾnwš* meaning “man, person” is also attested in Palmyrene Aramaic. (DNWSI, 84.)

2. RŠ TDMWR

The North West Semitic term which is often used for professions is *rb* "head, chief, commander". The phrase *rš tdmwr* (CIS II 3944/2-3; DNWSI, 1042ff.) which represents Arabic *raʾs* or *raʾīs* of Tadmur. Of course the word *rʾs*/*rʾš* is common Semitic (Leslau 1991, 458), but it seems to be that this specific meaning "chief, leader" is an Arabic development. May be the word *rʾš* was used here instead of the North West Semitic term *rb* "chief, leader" which is widely used in these languages. The term *rʾš* is also attested in a Nabataean inscription. Two titles are mentioned, *ryš ḥgrʾ* "leader of Ḥigrā" and *ryš tymʾ* "leader of Taimā". (Altheim-Stiehl 1973, II, 251f.; O'Connor 1986, 222.)

3. ṬʿWN GMLʾ

This phrase is attested several times in the Tariff inscription. (see for example, CIS II 3913/17.) In the North West Semitic epigraphic materials the word *ṭʿwn* is attested only once in Imperial Aramaic, namely in the Aḥiqār proverbs (Kottsieper 1990, 205.) and then only in the Palmyrene inscriptions. (DNWSI, 428.) The verb *ṭʿn* seems to be common Semitic. (Leslau 1991, 543.) But the phrase *ṭʿwn gmlʾ* "camel-load" seems to be of Arabic origin. The Palmyrene word *ṭʿwn* corresponds to the Arabic *ẓaʿūn*. The Arabic lexicons give the meaning "load" (Tāǧ, article *ẓʿn*; Lane, 1911.) for this word.

4. LBRYK ŠMH LʿLMʾ

"for the blessing of his name for eternity". (Lidzbarski 1898, 475; DNWSI, 201f.. This phrase or sometimes just *bryk šmh lʿlmʾ* "his name is blessed for eternity" is always used in the votive inscriptions (CIS II 4047).) Th. Nöldeke (1870, 106.) suggests that this phrase is rather Arabic than Aramaic which seems to be plausible.

5. MGN MN KYSH.

This is attested in the following sentence: *dy ʾsq šyrtʾ mgn mn kysh* "because he brought up the caravan gratuitously, at his own expense". (CIS II, 3936/4.) The word *mgn* is mostly used as an adverb, not only in the North West Semitic languages (DNWSI, 593.) but also in Akkadian meaning "gift, gratis", (Kaufman 1974, 67.) and has been suggested by von Soden (1964, 339-44.) to be of Hurrian origin. However, this word occurs in Palmyrene inscriptions meaning "gratis". Scholars agree that this word came to Arabic

through Aramaic (Hebbo 1970, 331). May be this word is an early borrowing from Akkadian into Arabic. However, it is widely used in North West Semitic languages. Nevertheless, it may be assumed that the usage of *mgn* (*maǧǧānan*) in Palmyrene inscriptions is Arabic and at any case the sentence *mgn mn kysh* (= *maǧǧānan min kīsihi*) is clearly an Arabic usage still used today.

6. BṬB

"with good". (CIS II, 3973/11.) This is a Nabataean phrase. It occurs very often in the Nabataean inscriptions especially in those from the Sinai. It always appears as an ending of a text. (DNWSI, 416.) It could be considered as a typical Nabataean phrase. However, it is unknown in the Old and Imperial Aramaic inscriptions, a fact which means that this phrase must be considered as an Arabic influence.

CONCLUSION

This examination of the vocabularies of the Palmyrene inscriptions has shown that the influence of Arabic is considerable. The great portion of Arabic loans in Palmyrene Aramaic is found in the sphere of religious (*ʾpklʾ*, *škrʾ*, *gnyʾ*, *mwlyʾ*, *qywm*, *ḥrm*) and social life (*gbl*, *pḥd/pḥz*, *ḥyrtʾ*, *gr*, *gml*). The word *šyrtʾ* is an important economical term. The Arabic loans in the Nabataean and Palmyrene inscriptions are of importance for the history of the Arabic language. Perhaps some of the these loans have their earliest attestation in these inscriptions.

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